

Gangaji Podcast  
Being Yourself  
Episode 9  
Host Barbara Denempont  
The Joy of Failure  
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[00:00] MUSIC

[00:03] GANGAJI: You *have* made it, you are here. You survived your mother's womb, you survived the birth, you survived adolescence. You made it! But the drive that has been taught you: "but I'm not making it enough, I have to make it more" –

SATSANG PARTICIPANT: "I have to keep on making it."

GANGAJI: Yes "I have to keep on making it."

PARTICIPANT: "It's not like I can stop."

GANGAJI: – it's the uphill, uphill –

PARTICIPANT: "I cannot continue on this."

GANGAJI: And you *can* stop. That's the message that I bring to you from my teacher.

[00:36] BARBARA DENEMPONT, HOST: Hello and welcome to *Being Yourself, Self-Inquiry with Gangaji*. My name is Barbara Denempont and I am very happy to welcome you to Gangaji's podcast.

I've been diving into over 20 years of recorded archives, and these last couple of months I've been focusing on this topic of self-hatred. Now some of you might feel like that's a word you don't really relate to, but there is a word I think we can all relate to, and that is "failure". Failure is perhaps what we avoid the most, because underneath failure there is a deeper fear, maybe what we might call the worst-case scenario. What's the worst that could possibly happen if I don't make it, if I don't get this right, if I fail?

So I want to bring you this dialogue. And I really like this particular dialogue because there's a way that as you're listening, you can just sit in the seat, so to speak, you can receive Gangaji's questions as your questions, as if you were right there.

Let's take a listen.

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[01:42] SATSANG PARTICIPANT: Yeah, I'm very new to the program, but after last night I already started to see how this can help me.

GANGAJI: Oh good.

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

GANGAJI: What did you discover?

PARTICIPANT: I have been working on acceptance and surrender for quite some time. But the way that I worked at it, now that, after last night I could see very clearly that I wasn't embracing, or containing, I was still *engaging* with my mental stories.

GANGAJI: Ah hah, excellent.

PARTICIPANT: And also sort of indulging.

GANGAJI: Yes, with your emotional stories, yes the –

PARTICIPANT: I know, it seems suffering on the surface, overwhelmingly so, but there is some pleasure.

GANGAJI: Very interesting and humbling to realize that.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, there's like, almost like a feeding. I don't know how you say it.

GANGAJI: This is so clear, yes, feeding, feeding off your own suffering.

PARTICIPANT: I know.

GANGAJI: Yeah, it's shocking.

PARTICIPANT: And, very sick, right? Reasonably, I don't think I would do that kind of thing.

GANGAJI: Right. But, but you know it's like a dog gnawing at its paw or something.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

GANGAJI: Something is missing, and he gnaws and makes a raw, red spot.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah I know, and I cannot let go.

GANGAJI: Right. So essential to see that, to discover that –

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

GANGAJI: – that there's something you're doing to amplify the suffering, or to, to make it more dramatic, or to, to hurt more.

PARTICIPANT: Exactly, but why in the name of – I'm trying to resolve it, trying to accept?

GANGAJI: Well, there's a bigger racket going on. So yes, everything in the name of – to be a good person, to be awake, to be enlightened – then just becomes food for that suffering machine.

PARTICIPANT: I know.

GANGAJI: Yes, good. But now what?

PARTICIPANT: But it's hard to tell –

GANGAJI: No, not really. It's not really hard to tell.

PARTICIPANT: Um, I'm learning.

GANGAJI: Well you see, in any moment that you're willing to tell the truth, and you can see when you're not willing to tell the truth, 'cause it has a different feel to it, it's like "not now", "well I don't know about that". Or "okay, what's the truth here?". Am I contributing to this suffering? Am I indulging this suffering?

PARTICIPANT: I think that I am.

GANGAJI: And then, in your, when you tell the truth, you then have a choice.

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

GANGAJI: And that choice is "okay I'll continue, but I will do it consciously", or "I will stop, consciously". And it's a, it's a challenge, because there's a habit of indulging.

PARTICIPANT: Exactly.

GANGAJI: But this is, this choice is bigger than that habit, if you are true to it.

PARTICIPANT: Yes. Last night I was brushing my teeth, but at the same time I was watching a video, your video. And then I suddenly realized, oh suffer or not, it's entirely up to me.

GANGAJI: Ha! What an insight. What an insight.

PARTICIPANT: But, still this morning –

GANGAJI: Oh here, okay. So here comes the past then, or the future –

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

GANGAJI: - but it, it's the "but". Okay so what, how did that formulate itself?

PARTICIPANT: So this morning, I was meditating. So my way of working on my acceptance may be peculiar. I usually brought up something I haven't processed in the past, bring up the scenario, and I see my emotion coming up, like my reactions to this scenario - someone said this, do this to me - things like that, I haven't been able to completely let go or forgive. I bring it up again and I see how I process them. As I said, usually in this process I lost myself in the mental stories, but today, this morning I was seeing, I saw more this time. I saw that, I see that my primary struggle has been seeking approvals from others. And I'm very receptive to other people's opinion – not receptive – sensitive to other people's opinion and judgments. And I realized at the same time that their judgment and their opinions are completely out of my hands.

GANGAJI: That's right.

PARTICIPANT: I have absolutely no say in this. But then again, I continue to insist on it.

GANGAJI: Yep, that's a prison, isn't it?

PARTICIPANT: I, I feel - yes exactly. I know "oh this is suffering". If I insist, if I insist to seek approval from this particular person – "she has to like me" – almost like that, but I –

GANGAJI: And if she does, you're happy, and if she doesn't, you're sad.

PARTICIPANT: Exactly, and ...

GANGAJI: So what's the solution?

PARTICIPANT: Then I go deeper, and I realized that, I think with the help of the inquiry question, questionnaire, I realized that, deep down, I don't believe I have true value unless I make it.

GANGAJI: Yes.

PARTICIPANT: Unless –

GANGAJI: Unless you construct it.

PARTICIPANT: Unless I succeed.

GANGAJI: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT: But I haven't resolved that.

GANGAJI: Well here you are.

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

GANGAJI: So, and this is, many people in this room can relate directly to this. "I don't believe I have true value." So that means that you're worthless.

PARTICIPANT: Exactly.

GANGAJI: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT: No matter how much I achieve.

GANGAJI: No matter how much you try you fall back down into worthlessness.

PARTICIPANT: And it's like just never enough.

GANGAJI: So why not, in this moment, as an experiment, just be completely worthless.

PARTICIPANT: So now it's hard.

GANGAJI: What makes it, now it's different from *feeling* worthless, it's deeper than feeling worthless. It's really being completely worthless, so that the whole game of, of being anything different is finished. What's the emotion that comes up then? Now.

PARTICIPANT: Now it's different from when I was filling in the questionnaire, now kind-of feel a little bit "okay, so that's it".

GANGAJI: So is that a, a "okay that's it" in despair? Is there some despair?

PARTICIPANT: It's almost like I can stop seeking.

GANGAJI: You can stop seeking. And if you stop seeking, what's the worst -

PARTICIPANT: I try to just -

GANGAJI: - that could happen to you?

PARTICIPANT: Nothing.

GANGAJI: Well that's the truth. But if we really know that to be a truth, it's not an issue. If there's some deep-seated fear that - if I stop seeking then the devil will get me, or I'll fall into this hole, or nobody will ever like me.

PARTICIPANT: Nobody will ever like me. But so what?

GANGAJI: Well that's all the truth, if it's the true, truth internally as well. So in order to discover "is that true for me internally?" there's just this willingness to be what you have been running away from. To be – for a moment – worthless. To surrender. To open.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, because I've tried too hard already.

GANGAJI: Yes, you have tried too hard. And many successes. But they don't count for anything when there's a failure.

PARTICIPANT: No.

GANGAJI: Yes it's, so it's just "okay", you turn –

PARTICIPANT: I just cannot keep up with the game anymore.

GANGAJI: That's right, that's why you're here. You turn and face this demon that has been chasing you, this demon of failure, this demon of worthlessness or self-hatred, however it's formulated, and you just say "here, now".

PARTICIPANT: But sometimes I hate myself.

GANGAJI: Well there's, sometimes, but how about right now? When you open to this worthlessness?

PARTICIPANT: I feel kind-of relaxed.

GANGAJI: Kind-of relaxed. Where is the worthlessness when you open to it in this moment? Do you, do you see it anywhere? Does it exist, when you open to it?

PARTICIPANT: No, it's a story.

GANGAJI: That's right. That's right. What a powerful story. But where is that power when you turn toward it rather than running away from it? You turn toward it, where is the power of that story?

PARTICIPANT: No I need, I need more, I need more help from you now. Do, are you asking where the story comes from?

GANGAJI: I'm asking when you recognize it's just a story, and where is then the power of that story? Does it still have power when you –

PARTICIPANT: No.

GANGAJI: That's it. It does, it has no power when it's recognized –

PARTICIPANT: It just appears –

GANGAJI: – when it's faced –

PARTICIPANT: – information or something.

GANGAJI: Yeah, a piece of information. I succeeded here or I failed here. Very useful information. When we internalize that is that “Oh, I'm a success” or “I'm a failure”.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah you know what it is sometimes –

GANGAJI: Not useful.

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

GANGAJI: It's suffering. Unnecessary suffering.

PARTICIPANT: Okay.

GANGAJI: You follow?

PARTICIPANT: I follow.

GANGAJI: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT: I just hope that I can keep it.

GANGAJI: Okay, this is the first – you can't. You can't keep it. So lose it completely right now. So just lose everything right now.

PARTICIPANT: Then I will suffer again.

GANGAJI: Right, well lose that, that thought, too. Lose everything, and what's here?

PARTICIPANT: It's a little bit scary.

GANGAJI: Oh good, it's a little bit scary. There's something deeper here then. And you open to that fear just like you open to the story, as just being a story. You open to this emotionally as something you're experiencing. In your body somewhere? Emotions are somewhere in the body, yeah so –

PARTICIPANT: And also here.

GANGAJI: Yeah. So you let your attention just fall into it, without a story, without an outcome or a future. What are you experiencing? There's no right or wrong answer for this.

PARTICIPANT: I feel more relaxed, like, it's like things are settling, settling down inside.

GANGAJI: Yeah. With, would you call that –

PARTICIPANT: And I feel confused at the same time.

GANGAJI: So, let's say, mentally confusing and emotionally more peaceful?

PARTICIPANT: I don't know, it's a little bit – unease, like I'm not used to this.

GANGAJI: That's right. That's right. That's good. Yeah. It's like being kissed for the first time, it's like "whoa, what's going on here?".

PARTICIPANT: But it's kind-of exciting at the same time.

GANGAJI: But it's kind-of nice.

PARTICIPANT: Exciting at the same time.

GANGAJI: Yeah. That's right, that's life. That's life's invitation. Life can be fearful, definitely, but it's profoundly exciting. And it can be confusing, because we, somehow our minds can't direct it or order it, even though we have learned how to order it: "I will be successful" – "I failed again". "I will not hurt" – "I hurt again".

PARTICIPANT: "I have to make it" – all the time.

GANGAJI: Yeah "I have to make it". And this is – "I can't make this". It's really the humbling of the mental power. It benefits, the mind totally benefits from this, but only from a place of openness. Yes, you can't make it.

PARTICIPANT: I can't make it?

GANGAJI: You can't make it. You can't make it. And what's here?

PARTICIPANT: I'm off the hook!

GANGAJI: You're off the hook, that's it! Couldn't be better said. You are off the hook! That's right.

PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

GANGAJI: Oh so beautiful. When you're off the hook, then you swim, you live. You see "what's here?". And it may be scary things, maybe confusing things, but you are free, you're been set free.

PARTICIPANT: I'm free. I can, it's okay, I'm not making it.



GANGAJI: Yeah, nobody's making it! We have, it *seems* like we're making it for a little while, but continually we aren't making it. That's not the nature of what it means to, to be a life form.

PARTICIPANT: I don't have to make it.

GANGAJI: You *can't* make it! You can have the appearance of making it or not making it, but finally you can't make it. It's bigger than that. And it's here.

PARTICIPANT: I feel like my mind's coming in to possess this.

GANGAJI: Oh it's good to see this. Yeah, it's very good to see this, it's natural. That will happen, the mind will come in to possess this. And that's when you, I invite you to lose everything. See if you can lose this. Then if you say "oh, I've got to keep this", then that's a version of making it.

PARTICIPANT: Exactly.

GANGAJI: Yeah. So it's like "okay, I can't keep anything". And what is still here?

PARTICIPANT: Everything's still here.

GANGAJI: Yes, everything. And the relationship you have to everything is as the source of everything.

PARTICIPANT: Oh my God!

GANGAJI: Yeah, yes.

PARTICIPANT: It's just a story. Somehow, somewhere I was told I have to make it.

GANGAJI: That's right, of course, it's survival. It's, you, you have to make it for yourself, for your DNA, for your tribe, for your species. So it, yes it's profound. And you *have* made it, you are here. You survived your mother's womb, you survived the birth, you survived adolescence. You made it! But the drive that has been taught you: "but I'm not making it enough, I have to make it more" –

PARTICIPANT: "I have to keep on making it."

GANGAJI: Yes "I have to keep on making it."

PARTICIPANT: "It's not like I can stop."

GANGAJI: – it's the uphill, uphill –

PARTICIPANT: "I cannot continue on this."

GANGAJI: And you *can* stop. That's the message that I bring to you from my teacher, and from his teacher. And it is a heresy in the, the world, but it is – off the hook. You can stop, you can unhook yourself, and swim, swim away freely.

PARTICIPANT: Thank you so much.

GANGAJI: You are so welcome! So, so beautiful. It's the only success that counts. The swimming freely.

PARTICIPANT: You mean my setting my free, setting me, myself free?

GANGAJI: Yes, that's right. That's right.

PARTICIPANT: I have been thinking "what is true success?" for a long time.

GANGAJI: Ah, well ...

PARTICIPANT: Like I have to – somehow it came down to happiness. But it's hard to be happy all the time either.

GANGAJI: That's right, that's right. But that gets closer, that gets closer, and really the question is "what do I truly want?" What do you truly want? Finally, absolutely want?

PARTICIPANT: Just be at ease and accept however I am.

GANGAJI: And where will you look for that?

PARTICIPANT: Actually nowhere.

GANGAJI: That's right. The habit is to look somewhere. The prison is to look somewhere. But to stop looking anywhere is, is this opening that you showed us. "Oh, well then what's here?" I'm not looking for anything, what's here?

PARTICIPANT: Peace.

GANGAJI: Peace is here. So beautiful.

PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

GANGAJI: Thank you so much.

PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

GANGAJI: You know we hope, we hear about peace, or we hear about happiness and we hope that we can *learn* it. Or we hear about success, or we hear about survival and we hope we can *learn* it. And you *can* learn how to survive to a degree, and then it's out of your hands, you don't

survive. And you *can* learn to be a success, but then you recognize – but there are places where I’m not a success. And because we have, our mental power has grown so much, usefully, it’s a good thing because you do survive, and it’s intelligent to survive, but there’s an arrogance that goes with that power that continually has to be undercut by the same power. Because, within your mind, you also know this is much bigger than what you can handle or do. And so this undercutting, this confusion, or this bad dream that comes up, is really in support of your own unraveling and surrender. So I love the analogy of like a red light going off on your car. It means something’s wrong with the car, it’s a signal. But if you get mad at the red light for going off, or you unscrew the red light because it’s an irritant, it shouldn’t be there, you just got the car checked, why is this red light going off, if shouldn’t be there. It’s like “oh, red light going off, oh suffering happening here, oh”. Well that’s, how is this pointing me to what I truly want, to what’s always here, to what doesn’t have to change in *any* way to be discovered.

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[20:55] BARBARA: What a remarkable demonstration of how joyful it can be to meet failure. I’m going to continue diving into the archives for more gems for us to listen to, and if you have a topic suggestion, I’d love to hear from you. You can write to me, Barb, at [info@gangaji.org](mailto:info@gangaji.org). That’s [info@gangaji.org](mailto:info@gangaji.org).

And if you’d like to know more about Gangaji’s in-person events, her online calendar, or to just find out more about the work of the Gangaji Foundation, I invite you to visit the website, at [gangaji.org](http://gangaji.org).

Thanks for listening. Until next time.